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The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) campaign of long-term resistance may be theoretically divided into three phases, each preceded by careful military and political preparation: retreat, resistance and offensive. These phases are described below.

Retreat (December 1946 - early 1948)

1. In view of its inferiority to the enemy in all respects during this period the DRV necessarily employed the following tactics:
  - a. Retreat into the mountains in order to organize a regular army and to form political and military cadres.
  - b. A scorched earth policy designed to weaken the enemy's capabilities for action.
  - c. Intense propaganda and systematic terrorism to discourage the population from collaboration with the enemy.
  - d. Guerrilla warfare.
2. The tactic of guerrilla warfare was used to expand the zone of DRV occupation while avoiding direct contact with the enemy. The DRV used only forces of the local defense units, and not the regular forces, in guerrilla attacks for the following reasons:
  - a. Because guerrilla attacks were carried out by the villagers themselves, French reprisals were carried out blindly against the entire population of the DRV zones, thus provoking the anger of the people and also deterring anti-Communist elements in the French zones from cooperation with the French.
  - b. Superior troops of the village units could be detected and later used to augment the ranks of the regular forces.
  - c. Regular forces could be preserved for future operations.

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3. Guerilla operations carefully planned and executed only when their success appeared certain, included:
  - a. Ambushes along routes travelled by the enemy and directed at the principal convoy sections.
  - b. Use of automatic mines.
  - c. Surprise attacks against isolated villages which had been infiltrated by DRV troops.

Resistance (1948 - Present)

4. DRV propaganda and directives have described this phase as the longest and most difficult, requiring the maximum effort and sacrifice on the part of the soldier as well as of the ordinary citizen. It began when the regular DRV forces had attained some strength, the guerrilla forces had shown increased effectiveness, and the DRV zone of occupation had been extended to its limit. At this time, the French were at a disadvantage because of having to disperse their forces between small posts throughout the French-occupied zones; once these forces were removed the area was automatically left to DRV control. This was especially true in North Vietnam, where the French had not succeeded in utilizing small autonomous armed groups, such as the religious sects in the south, to supplement their own forces.
5. The resistance phase may be divided into two parts:
  - a. The period in which guerrilla warfare predominated and regular force action was secondary. During this period the regular forces were reorganized, supplementary local troops units were formed, and small offensives were launched to gain experience.
  - b. The period in which organized offensives replaced guerrilla activity in primary importance. This period was launched with the attacks against Cao Bang, Bac Kan and Langson in August 1950, when the regular forces were sufficiently strong to be sent into combat. At the same time additional units of local troops in northern Annam and one local regiment for each province of North Vietnam were being formed. The action of these provincial regiments is confined to the support of regular army units fighting in their respective areas and to the activation of guerrilla operations in secondary combat zones.
6. During this period, the DRV is not attempting to gain ground, but rather to decrease the enemy's combat effectiveness. For this reason the attacks are aimed primarily at French or Foreign Legion units rather than Vietnamese troops, which are more easily replaced. Expendable elements, according to the DRV, are first the population, then the guerrillas, the local forces, and last the regular forces.
7. Current DRV strategy is as follows:
  - a. Attacks against the weakest points in enemy territory, avoiding the strong points.
  - b. Removal of attention from the principal front through several preliminary false maneuvers.
  - c. Attempts to win small battles rather than risk defeat in large-scale campaigns. For this reason the DRV always employs more forces than necessary for victory and retreats when victory no longer appears feasible.<sup>1</sup>

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Offensive

8. In principle this last phase of the long-term resistance will not begin until the balance is definitely on the DRV side. This period will involve a slow but thorough penetration of the French-occupied regions.

1. [REDACTED] Comment. Vo Nguyen Giap was criticized after the January 1951 attacks against Vinh Yen-Phuc Yen for not adhering to this principle.

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